

FROM THE EDITORS

This issue of *Rapa Nui Journal* focuses on prehistoric economics and subsistence, replicative archaeology, and early agriculture in the Marquesas Islands.

Professors Thomas Dalton (Professor of Economics, Southern University at New Orleans), R. Morris Coats (Argent Bank Professor of Economics, Nicholls State University, Thibodaux, Louisiana) and Leon Taylor (Associate Professor of Economics, KIMEP, Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics, and Strategic Research, Almaty, Kazakhstan) use Rapa Nui's past as an example when searching for a way to navigate into the future of the Earth. Rapa Nui has been a quite popular model of what may happen if we overexploit our resources. However, in our opinion, the real disaster of Rapa Nui culture was not their internal struggles, but the external European contacts. The final blow to traditional Rapa Nui culture came with the Peruvian slave raids' "black-birding" in the 1860s. A question that we may ask is: What path would Rapa Nui culture have taken without European interaction? It is a hypothetical question that we cannot answer, but only imagine! A dynamic Rapa Nui culture still exists, however, and it is heading toward new directions.

The paper by Dalton, Coats and Taylor was somewhat delayed when the three authors were forced to evacuate New Orleans as hurricane Katrina raced ashore. Taylor, a professor at Tulane University, was trapped in his second-floor office for days before he was rescued and evacuated to the Houston Astrodome. Because some programs at Tulane were subsequently discontinued, he took a position in Kazakhstan! Dalton's specialty is labor and public economics; he was Professor of Economics at Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO). He evacuated prior to Katrina's landfall but, with sharp declines in enrollment, he relocated to the University of Arizona. Coats specializes in public economics, with an emphasis on an interdisciplinary area of economics that applies economic reasoning to political and social phenomena or non-market activity, called public choice. Among the courses Coats teaches at Nicholls State University is one concerning environmental and natural resource economics. Coats also evacuated New Orleans and his life-altering experience was hearing the stories of evacuees whose lives were turned upside down, and witnessing dreadful conditions that prevail in the city as New Orleans struggles to recreate itself.

Rapa Nui is not the only place to experience a cultural collapse in the past; in fact, prehistory is full of such events. An article by Professor Colin Renfrew entitled *Systems Collapse as Social Transformation* deals with this issue, describing general features of systems collapse. Renfrew also discusses classical examples such as the Mycenaean civilization, the Indus Valley, Egypt, the Classic Maya, Tiahuanaco, etc., and suggests that collapses are indicated by the disappearance of organizational structures, but usually there are elements that continue into a following period, and often called a "Dark Age" by archaeologists. This denomination is due to the fact that material remains often become less visible (such

periods are probably not that "dark" but may instead be seen as periods of transformation). In many cases, new central areas develop in the old core areas and new authority is claimed through descent from earlier rulers or from the heroes that have overthrown the earlier rulers (Renfrew 1984:366-389). These processes concern the development of chiefdoms in Scandinavian prehistory, and have been discussed by Kristian Kristiansen and Michael Rowlands. Their research indicates that, in a long-time perspective, the Scandinavian Bronze and Iron Age chiefdoms appear to go through evolutions and devolutions in a cycle. A first peak is seen at around 1700 BC but it declines around 500 BC, and once more reaches a peak at the beginning of the Viking age, around AD 800 (Kristiansen and Rowlands 1998:252-264).

David Addison's paper deals with his Marquesan research and concerns agriculture and subsistence. Addison began his studies of tropical horticulture at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo and received his Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. He began working in the Marquesas in 1992. Little research had previously been done on the traditional agricultural systems of the Marquesas, and yet they are important for understanding East Polynesian prehistory. For the past seven years, he has been conducting research in Samoa. Addison's future plans include continuing research on traditional agriculture in the Marquesas and also the prehistory of Samoa.

Because Addison's study is quite extensive, it will therefore be divided in four parts in the following way: Part I: *General observations on Marquesan agriculture*. Part II: *Cultivation and processing of specific agricultural products*. Part III: *Observations on land ownership and labor*. Part IV: *Marquesan food resources*. In this issue we start with Part I. Addison's ethnohistorical material is collected from the notes made by twenty-seven foreigners who visited or lived in the Marquesas Islands from 1774 to the end of the 19th century, and is useful to all who are interested in early Polynesian plants and agriculture. It also shows us the interest of historical/contact archaeology and evaluation of such data.

Robert Bollt received a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Hawai'i in 2005 and he is currently a lecturer there. He has excavated sites in Hawai'i, the Marquesas, and the Austral Islands, the latter being the focus of much of his research. Bollt's students and co-authors, Jesse E. Clark, Philip R. Fisher, and Hirosato K. Yoshida, are undergraduate anthropology majors at the University of Hawai'i.

Bollt and his students conducted an experiment in replication and classification of *mata'a* stone tools from Easter Island, and they discuss how shape might relate to stages of production. Bollt's paper, by focusing on the *mata'a*, takes another line of great interest, experimental archaeology.

The *mata'a* probably had central importance during the Rapa Nui civil wars, the time of internal collapse. Bollt's experiments deal with the question of how the Rapanui shaped their tools. An ideal shape was probably the aim, but some-

times the manufacturing process went wrong and the tool had to be shaped in an alternative manner. The *mata'a* can be divided into different stages in their production, leading to different types. However, the size of the *mata'a* may indicate functional differences, but such questions may be the scope of a future paper...

Our Look Back feature for this issue is *Three Voyages of a Naturalist. Being an Account of Many Little-Known Islands in Three Oceans Visited by the "Valhalla" R.Y.S.* It is written by M. J. Nicoll, a Member of the British Ornithologists' Union and was published in London in 1908. The *Valhalla* was at Easter Island from March 10-13, 1903. Nicoll had the good fortune to be taken along on several sea voyages by the Earl of Crawford who, suffering from rheumatism and asthma, sailed off for sunnier climes to escape the cold and damp winters in England.

Paul Horley contributes a short paper about the prominent Russian scientist, Nikolay Nikolaevich Miklouho-Maclay. This year, 2006, marks the 160th anniversary of Nikolay's birth.

Plans are moving along at a great rate for the VIIth International Conference to be held at Gotland University, Sweden. Brochures are in the mail and we urge everyone to send in their reservation as early as possible. Anyone wishing to receive a brochure, please contact us at rapanuibooks@att.net or see the conference website at

<http://www.hgo.se/archaeology/conference2007>

REFERENCES

- Kristiansen, K. and M. Rowlands 1998. *Social Transformation in Archaeology: Global and Local Perspectives*. London and New York: Taylor & Francis (Routledge).
- Renfrew, C. 1984. *Systems Collapse as Social Transformation. Approaches to Social Archaeology*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

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